wd eye

OPENERS

SEPTEMBER 25, 1995

Surf's Up in Space Mountain

What would the cinematic thriller "Jaws" be without John Williams' ominous soundtrack? Certainly the menacing music made the shark's teeth a little sharper, its gaping mouth a bit bigger, its intent a little more sinister—at least in the minds of the viewing audience.

Thanks to an R&D/Creative Technology breakthrough sound system, WDI has adopted that same line of thinking in creating "attraction soundtracks" for two recent thrill rides: the inspiring Indiana Jones theme plays throughout the *Indiana Jones™ Adventure*, and *Space Mountain* at Disneyland Paris enhances its gravity-defying loops with an aggressive orchestration. Now, *Space Mountain* at Disneyland is joining the club by adding a distinctly Southern Californian dose of on-board audio as part of the attraction's current enhancement effort.

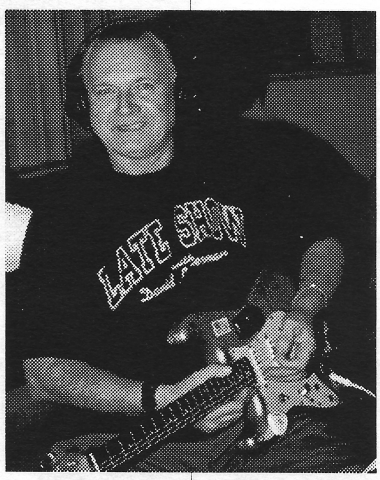
When Concept Development vice president Eddie Sotto and senior media designer Aarin Richard were initially kicking around the idea of adding a musical score to *Space Mountain* at Disneyland, they were thinking about "Aquarium," a classical French piece from Camille Saint-Saën's "Carnival of the Animals." After Eddie suggested a rock 'n' roll version, Aarin created several interpretations of the composition on his MIDI equipment, including traditional orchestration, heavy metal and surf music demos.

TOM SMITH (2)

Dick Dale, King of the Surf Guitar, confers with Eddie Sotto (left) and Aarin Richard (right) before recording the energetic "attraction soundtrack" for *Space Mountain* at Disneyland.

When Aarin played the demos for Eddie, Tony Baxter, Skip Lange and others, the overwhelming choice was the surf music.

Once the style was decided, Aarin sequestered himself in his home studio to compose and arrange the score. For the attraction's initial ascent, he envisioned suspense-building strains played by orchestral synthesizers, and listened to several old sci-fi and horror soundtracks for inspiration, including "The Outer Limits," "Creature From the Black Lagoon," "Cape Fear" and "They Came From Mars."



But for the vehicle's high-speed journey through the stars, Aarin penned some pulse-quickening surf music based on the "Aquarium" theme. "One day," Aarin recalls, "Eddie and I were listening to Dick Dale records for reference when Eddie said, 'Let's just call Dick and see if he'll do it.'" Several weeks later, lo and behold, there was the King of the Surf Guitar strolling into the 1401 Flower Building's Studio A to lay down some of his signature guitar licks.

Eddie, who has long been a fan of Dick Dale, says it was the natural choice. "When Quentin Tarentino used 'Miserlou'—a great Dick Dale tune—in the opening of 'Pulp Fiction,' it really opened up a whole new generation to his music. His popularity has exploded in Japan and Europe. He's hot, hip and cool—and a terrific match for the *Space Mountain* crowd."

What separates Dick Dale from other guitar players, says Aarin, is his intensity: "Dick has this raw energy that really adds an edge to his playing. It's like trying to stand on a moving locomotive."

WDI also harnessed that power in the *Space Mountain* pre-show. "Doug Miller and TPP were putting together this great video with space clips from the 1960s," says Eddie, "and Dick's 'Ghost Riders in the Sky' was perfect for the video.

"As Disneyland is an original," he continues, "Dick Dale is also an original. He represents classic rock 'n' roll history. He invented the 'surf sound,' and even brought his original Stratocaster guitar to the session. Plus, he remembers peeking over the fence and watching Disneyland being built."

TOM SMITH (2)

Audio/Video's Greg Lhotka, Aarin and Sam Buckner (left to right) mastered the mixes in WDI's Studio A while Dick and bassist Ron Eglit (below) played fast and furious.

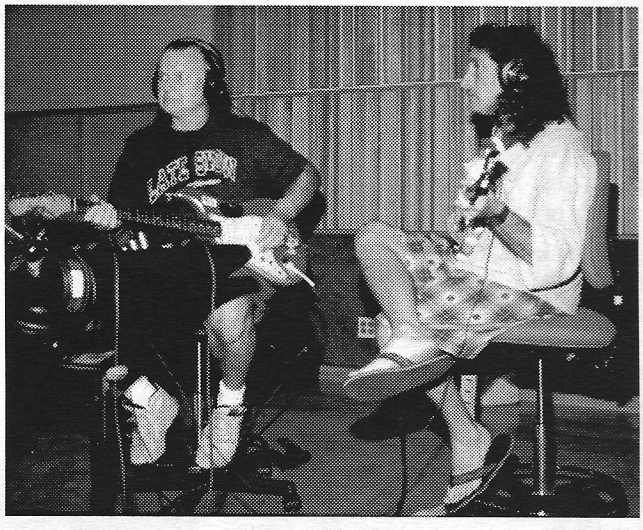
Aarin and his Audio/Video compatriots Sam Buckner and Greg Lhotka have just finished sweetening the final mix, and now the music track must be matched with the ride track so that each of the *Space Mountain* soundtrack's six sections are in seamless synchronization.

One example is the attraction's careening downward spiral. "The guitar slide is synched to the [ride's] curves—as the vehicle careens around a bend, Dick slides his hand down the neck of the guitar," Eddie explains, imitating the electric sound and illustrating the motion on an air guitar.

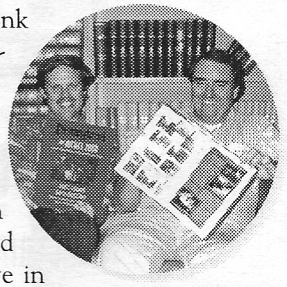
However, passing this aural exam will not be an easy task. Because the weight of the vehicle fluctuates with each load of guests, the duration of any given ride can vary up to 30 seconds. To avoid having the precisely timed tracks thrown out of sync, each musical section is triggered by an on-board sensor, much like a special effect. To compensate for the variance, Aarin purposely ended each section with a sustained cadence that will blend into the start of the following section.

According to Aarin, the *Space Mountain* soundtrack, like any good movie score, makes all the difference in the world. "When we were testing the system during a ride through," he recalls, "and the sound system was shut off in the middle of the ride, it really made a noticeable difference. The music enhances the physicality of the experience and adds an emotional impact."

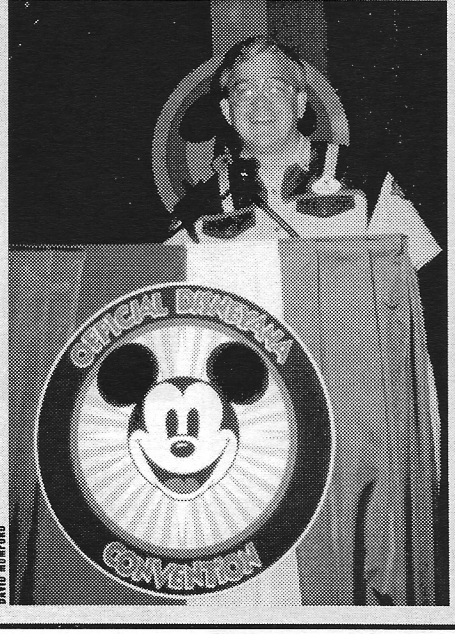
When *Space Mountain* re-opens in early November, says Eddie, WDI's enhancements will definitely strike an emotional chord with guests: "R&D, Show/Ride, A/V, Creative... everybody did a great job. We've really put some fun and spirit into it. You just let the music lead you through it."



The Grand Tour



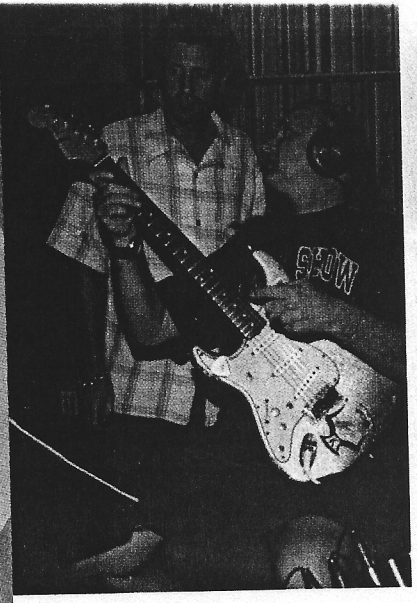
Sure, you think you know Disneyland, but just wait 'til you see what Imagineers Bruce Gordon and David Mumford have in store for the September 27 Breakfast Meeting. Bruce and David will regale all in attendance with rare images and little known stories from the Park's 40-year history, taken from their recently published book, *Disneyland: The Nickel Tour*. (You'll also be treated to an exclusive screening of their "Making of..." video) This meeting full of Magic Kingdom memories will begin at 8:00 a.m. in the IRC.



DAVID MUMFORD

Dateline Disneyana

Over 2,000 eager conventioneers turned out to hear WDI-Florida's Michael Lingerfelt (left) speak at the 1995 Official Disneyana Convention, held earlier this month at the Walt Disney World Resort. Michael, a principal facility design manager, wowed the crowd gathered at Disney's Contemporary Resort with a behind-the-scenes look at the WDW Magic Kingdom's New Tomorrowland.



SURF'S UP: Guitar great Dick Dale (right) helped Imagineer Eddie Sotto create a sound track for Space Mountain

SPACE MOUNTAIN RIDES A NEW MUSIC WAVE

MOST PEOPLE wouldn't make a connection between America's space program and surf guitar king Dick Dale. Fortunately, most Imagineers aren't most people.

"When the space race began in the early sixties, " explains Eddie Sotto, the Imagineer in charge of musically enhancing Space Mountain, "artists like The Ventures captured the optimism of space-age rock with guitar-laden songs, such as 'Out of Limits.'" That in mind, Sotto had composer Aarin Richard and audio engineer John Groper create a soundtrack to match the wild ride at Disneyland in California.

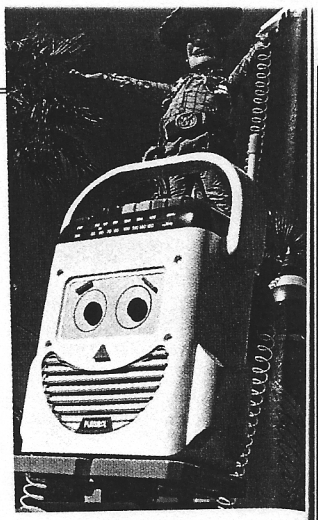
For the free-fall section of Space Mountain, Sotto chose a theme called "Aquarium" from *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns. Richard adapted the tune to a surf style to accompany the wild falls and sharp turns of the attraction. For the lifts and resolution section, Richard arranged music with sound effects recalling the campy sci-fi movies of the early sixties. If played to the hilt, the tension of Richard's composition and the intensity of the surf music would give the impression that the ride had been accelerated.

Sotto arranged for the surf guitar to be played by the Big Kahuna himself. "Energy unleashed," is how Richards described Dick Dale, who arrived at the studio with the same Fender equipment he's used since the fifties.

"When I first came to California in 1954," Dale said, "I stood outside the fenced-in area that was going to be Disneyland and knew I wanted to be a part of that someday. To work on the music of Space Mountain is like a dream come true — one I've been waiting for since 1954."

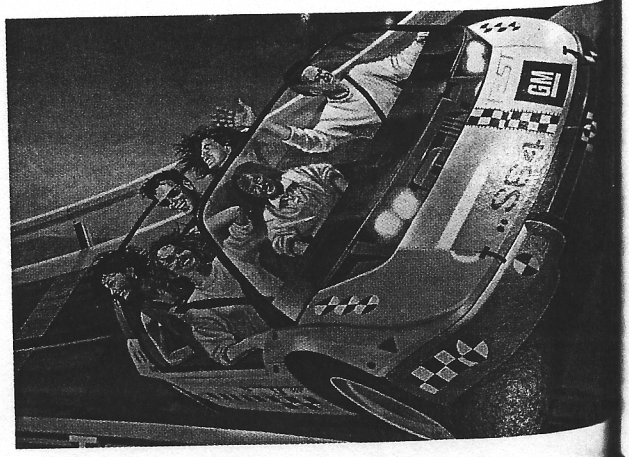
Play Nice

GET A TOY'S perspective on life this summer in the Toy Story Funhouse at Disneyland. Strap on an awkward foot base and hop, swing, and scoot your way through a Green Army Men Obstacle Course — you may feel more like Sid's crab-legged baby-



A MAN BEHIND: It's a *Toy Story* summer at Disneyland

head than a good soldier by the time you're done. Geared for younger kids, the funhouse has people-size versions of Woody, Buzz, and Bo Peep walking about. (Of course, it's the adults who find it impossible to resist reminding Buzz that he's only a toy.) All become larger than life during the *Toy Story* parade that curls through the park twice a day. (Call 714-999-4565.)

Not a Sunday Drive

WHEN IT OPENS at Epcot in the spring of 1997, Test Track will be the longest, fastest attraction at Disney World. A high-octane tour of automobile research and development, the GM-presented installation will give guests a dummy's-eye view of such industry practices as weather testing, road testing, and — hold on tight — crash testing.